

2020 VISION – DRAFT ACTION PLAN

COMMENTS FROM NINA SMITH

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OVERALL

Overall, this is a well presented plan that mixes vision and a fair degree of reality. I'd like to make the following comments. These follow the order of the document.

HIGH LEVEL

Although this is a plan for Hebden Bridge, and not even the whole of Hebden Royd, yet alone the neighbouring parishes, I do think the plan should recognise those issues that are of as much concern to our neighbours as to Hebden Bridge residents. Nowhere is this more apparent than the issue of the rural bus services.

OUR STRENGTHS

I would add a seventh:

7. Easy access, with frequent train services to York, Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Manchester, Preston and Blackpool.

BRINGING NEW LIFE TO OUR TOWN - VIBRANT, HARMONIOUS AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES.

I'd change the second bullet to read "Tolerance, respect and engagement between people of different cultures, background and beliefs" (two small words changed, but I think they make the phrase much more inclusive)

S1; THE TOWN CENTRE INFRASTRUCTURE.

"Integrating pedestrians with road vehicles in the town centre". Not sure about this wording. Prefer "Enabling pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles to co-exist in the town centre".

'Shared Space'(Proposal 1) Interesting concept, and definitely worth fully exploring. Ideally, it should cover the whole town centre footprint from the Co-op to Albert Street, up to Keighley Road, across to the White Lion, then down past the Town Hall to Old Gate.

Albert Street/Crown Street suggestions. I gather these are non-starters, which in my opinion is just as well!

Pedestrianisation (proposal 4 – traffic using Bridge Gate). Agree re the bollards. Alternatives are a farm style barred gate (manually operated) and ANPR cameras.

Proposal 7 (hangings). Disagree about permanent hangings. These will get in the way of the architecture – there are some excellent upper stories on Market Street

Proposal 8 (Market Street parking and traffic calming). Agree, although things will change if it becomes Shared Space. Evening parking outside the takeaway is important.

CANAL.

Agree re the surface (Proposal 9) This area should be properly accessible to wheelchair users and others with mobility problems.

Proposal 10. I'm told that this will cause problems in that it may prevent boats being craned in and out of the marina/ canal basin. Given there are already two bridges nearby to the west, the needs of boaters should take priority here.

CENTRAL STREET. Its state remains a disappointment. Surely there is a way that this can be resolved!

ACCESSIBILITY ISSUE – proposal 11. Agreed

SECTION 2 - THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

Broadly agree with this section. Some comments.

Para 1 – I think the plan should mention the exception to shops not remaining empty for long i.e. those that have deliberately been kept empty on Market Street for many years. They are an eyesore, and surely the Council should intervene.

Para 3. I think the internet is a bigger challenge to some of our local shops than are out-of-town developments, and thus this should come first. Do others agree?

THE MARKET.

Moving it could adversely impact on the footfall of the Valley Road shops (and Bonsalls). A move should only be contemplated if the whole site is to be redeveloped.

I'd very much welcome a second-hand book market, especially if stall prices were low enough to enable residents (like me) to have a go at selling some of our more valuable surplus books.

I like the idea of European themed markets. The French market that used to come to Tod was excellent.

The issue of food markets, in particular, needs to be discussed in the context of the impact on local shops, as the latter's overheads are much higher and, great as food markets are, we don't want to lose our "everyday" shops.

Proposal 17. I do think a promotional manager should be for the "greater" Hebden Bridge area including the hill tops parishes. I also feel that references to "developing a brand" should recognise that a "brand" is a tool - it doesn't in itself improve a town as the wording in the draft plan implies.

VISITOR ATTRACTIONS. The town/area needs a decent museum (to complement the archives held at Birchcliffe)

BROWN'S SITE

Agreed about its importance. I would like it to be kept as open space. Incredible Edible incorporating allotments would be good. An excellent use of part of site would be a swimming pool if the proposed one in Mytholmroyd does not go ahead. If a pool isn't needed, I'd support a hotel on part of the site, subject to a number of restrictions and stipulations re noise and appearance. Let's not lose this site to a supermarket that will adversely impact on our local shops.

HOUSING

Basically agree with this sentence. I'd like to see a welcome in the document for the McCarthy and Stone development on Victoria Road, and a recognition that other such developments may be needed within a few years, given the age profile of the area.

I wouldn't want to see building on the northern frontage to Bridge Lanes. These could be claustrophobic. The current landscaped site proves an attractive gateway to the town centre.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

I have authored as separate response to the transport elements of this section; it also reflects comments made at the workshop I led on 18 May. I would emphasise the need for this section to reflect the needs of the wider area and for proposals in it to be supported by all the bottom-tier councils in the greater Hebden Bridge area.

A major omission is road safety, and I'd like the plan to recommend extending the 20mph limit to cover a much broader footprint including the Valley Road and Victoria Road area, Palace House Road/ Fairfield, and Church Lane/ Mytholm Bank. We should be recommending active enforcement of the limit.

COMMUNITY, ARTISTIC AND SOCIAL LIFE.

Generally agree with this section. Our strong artistic and cultural community plays a strong part in what makes our town the joy it is.

Proposal 34. I'd amend this to specifically mention the need for a swimming pool in either HB or Mytholmroyd as a matter of some urgency. We must be one of the largest population areas in the country without a swimming pool.

GREENING OUR VALLEY

I broadly support this section. It needs to be stronger re the need to restore the quality of the tops as water and carbon soaks re culverts, peat bogs etc.

WALKING FROM HEBDEN BRIDGE TO HARDCASTLE CRAGGS

I'm not sure which section this is for, but an omission from the plan is accessing Hardcastle Craggs (lower part). I'd like the following paragraph included:

“People should be encouraged to walk from Hebden Bridge to Hhardcastle Craggs. The current best (off-road as far as possible) walking route should be clearly signposted from the railway station and the town centre, with signage at all conflict/confusion points. In the longer term, a complete walking route along the river from the west end of Spring Grove to the Craggs should be a key goal; negotiations with landowners currently blocking the best route should be instigated promptly.”

Nina Smith, version 2
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